

Message Text

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ACTION DHA-02

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3016

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PORT AU PRINCE 2652

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: SHUM, MASS, HA

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST FOR DETAILED HUMAN RIGHTS STATEMENT

REF: STATE 237752

1. SUMMARY. THIS TELEGRAM RESPONDS TO REFTEL REQUEST FOR DETAILED REVIEW OF ALL APPROACHES TO HOST GOVERNMENT AND ALL OTHER RELEVANT STEPS TAKEN OR CONTINUED BY EMBASSY SINCE SUMMER OF 1974 IN FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS. IT ALSO PROVIDES JUSTIFICATION FOR CONTINUING LIMITED AND CAREFULLY STRUCTURED MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN HAITI. EMBASSY COMMENTS ON DRAFT STATEMENT (STATE 239763) FOLLOW SEPTTEL. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY A-38 OF MARCH 18, 1975 AND A-26 OF MARCH 15, 1976 PROVIDE DETAILED REVIEW OF EMBASSY HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES FROM MID-1974 THROUGH LAST SPRING. WE HAVE CONTINUED TO PURSUE VIGOROUSLY OUR CONCERN FOR PROPER RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS WITH WIDE RANGE OF CONTACTS IN HAITI DURING THE LAST SIX MONTHS. HIGHLIGHT OF THIS EFFORT WAS AMBASSADOR'S DETAILED REVIEW OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN HAITI WITH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS EDNER BRUTUS ON AUGUST 19 (ISHAM/HEAVNER LETTER 8/20). AMBASSADOR HAS ALSO HAD COUNTLESS OTHER CONVERSATIONS ON SAME TOPIC WITH WIDE CONFIDENTIAL

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VARIETY OF HAITIAN OFFICIALS, RESIDENT FOREIGN DIPLOMATS, RELIGIOUS LEADERS, THE PRESS, OTHER PRIVATE CITIZENS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. OTHER EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE BEEN EQUALLY ACTIVE WITHIN RANGE

OF CONTACTS AVAILABLE TO THEM. FOR EXAMPLE, IN CONVERSATIONS WITH SECURITY SERVICE OFFICIALS WE HAVE REEMPHASIZED OUR CONCERN THAT POLITICAL PRISONERS BE TREATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS. POLITICAL OFFICER ATTENDED FURNERAL OF YOUNG NEWSPAPERS REPORTER RAYMOND, WHO DIED IN MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES JUNE 1 (PORT AU PRINCE 1472 AND 1539).

3. ALTHOUGH NOT COVERED AS EXTENSIVELY AS DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY IN PREVIOUS REPORTING, USIS HAS ALSO CONTRIBUTED HEAVILY AND EFFECTIVELY TO EMBASSY'S HUMAN RIGHTS EFFORT:

(A) THERE HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE REPLAY OF USIS WIRELESS FILE ARTICLES ON U.S. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SUBJECT, MAJOR SPEECHES AND POLICY PRONOUNCEMENTS AND, MORE RECENTLY, REFERENCES TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CURRENT ELECTION CAMPAIGN. CONGRESSIONAL OPINION AND ACTION IN THIS AREA HAVE ALSO BEEN PROMPTLY COMMUNICATED VIA REGULAR PRESS RELEASES. SECRETARY KISSINGER'S SANTIAGO OAS HUMAN RIGHTS ADDRESS WAS WIDELY REPORTED. NOTWITHSTANDING THE ABSENCE OF APPRECIABLE PRESS FREEDOM IN HAITI, EMBASSY HAS BEEN PLEASANTLY SURPRISED AT THE EXTENT OF LOCAL MEDIA COVERAGE OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS ON THE SUBJECT. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THIS FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION, BOTH FROM U.S. OFFICIAL SOURCES AND FROM WIRE SERVICE DESPATCHES, HAS FAVORABLY INFLUENCED GOH ATTITUDES AND POLICIES.

(B) THE USIS EXHIBIT, "LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS," THE MISSION'S SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT BICENTENNIAL PROGRAM, WAS VIEWED BY AN ESTIMATED 12,000 PERSONS AND WAS EXTENSIVELY REPORTED BY ALL MEDIA. THE EXHIBIT COMMUNICATED THE HISTORICAL COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO GUARANTEEING INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS AT HOME AND ABROAD. THE MESSAGE WAS NOT LOST ON THE HAITIAN AUDIENCES.

(C) IN A JULY 2 SPEECH AT CEREMONIES MARKING THE PARTICIPATION OF 800 HAITIAN VOLUNTEERS IN THE BATTLE OF SAVANNAH, THE AMBASSADOR
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DREW ON HAITIAN HISTORIANS TO STRESS THE SHARED GOAL IN BOTH REVOLUTIONS OF CONQUERING THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF MAN TO LIBERTY AND HUMAN DIGNITY. THIS MESSAGE ALSO CAME ACROSS TO HAITIAN AUDIENCES.

(D) UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR BANNER, USIS AND THE PORT AU PRINCE BINATIOANL CENTER ORGANIZED ROUND TABLES ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN APRIL AND OCTOBER 1975.

(E) THE FORMER DCM LECTURED MAY 19 TO THE HAITIAN BAR ASSOCIATION ON CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE UNITED STATES. USIS SENT COMPLETE TEXTS OF THE ADDRESS TO ALL THE MEDIA AND OTHER IMPORTANT LEADERS.

(F) USIS AVAILS ITSELF OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO CONVEY TO MEDIA AS WELL AS TO GOVERNMENT LEADERS THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE UNITED STATES REGARDS HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS. ON THE AVERAGE THE PRINCIPALS WRITERS, EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS HAVE BEEN APPROACHED ON THIS SUBJECT ONCE A MONTH.

4. EMBASSY-WIDE EFFORTS HAVE COINCIDED WITH A MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE IN RECENT YEARS, AND THIS SLOW TREND CONTINUES WITH OCCASIONAL SETBACKS. THE MORE CONSTRUCTIVE AND LESS ARBITRARY APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT BY JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER HAS HAD WIDESPREAD AND COMPLEMENTARY EFFECTS. INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE AGENCIES HAVE AUGMENTED THEIR PROGRAMS HERE, THE LOCAL ECONOMY IS STIRRING, AND THERE

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